

## Albert Gallatin Jenkins: 4

# Energetic Young Jenkins Made Brilliant Record in Studies at Marshall Academy

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This is the fourth in a series of articles on the life of lawyer-soldier-statesman Albert Gallatin Jenkins. Readers are invited to supply additional material for eventual inclusion in a biographical volume on General Jenkins.

By CONGRESSMAN  
KEN RECHLER

Greenbottom a century and a quarter ago in the 1830's was, like today, "an idyllic spot to live. By boat or by wagon in the olden days, it was not too far to slip 18 miles downstream to the thriving little village of Guyandotte. But to Captain William Jenkins, eager to give his daughter and two older sons a thorough education, this was a little far to go to school.

Before the days of school buses, a wealthy family in the hinterland would frequently hire a schoolmaster of "tutor" for the primary grades, before sending the children off to school. Captain Jenkins went one step further. He also set up a special school for his Negro servants in a specially constructed building on his vast property.

Eustasia, William Alexander, and Thomas Jefferson Jenkins were tutored in reading, writing and arithmetic by an imported schoolmaster. Little Albert Gallatin Jenkins begged hard to have the chance to learn some of these same mysteries that his older brothers and sister were studying. Finally, Albert's nurse carried the youngster to the impromptu tutoring school in her arms, with Albert's beloved cat going along for the ride to keep the little tot company. There was some surprise and consternation when little Albert ignored his feline playmate and expressed intense interest in the books and figures, as well as the penmanship of his sister and brothers.

### Devoured Latin At 10

The year 1840 was a fascinating one in American politics. The aging hero of the War of 1812, General William Henry Harrison (under whom Captain William Jenkins had served) was running for President on a platform of "Tippecanoe and Tyler, too" and on the strength of the fact that he drank hard cider and grew up in a log cabin.

For little 10-year-old Albert Gallatin Jenkins, the presidential campaign of 1840 carried no interest at all, however. At a time when most youngsters of Cub Scout age are straining at the leash and discovering the great outdoors, Albert was devouring Latin grammar. At the age of 10, he passed a remarkable examination in Latin grammar, without a single mistake.

Albert was very devoted to his sister, who was then 15. His sister Eustasia was very talented in music and the arts, and was awarded a scholarship at Oberlin College which was one of the few institutions of higher learning which admitted women in the 1840's. When his two brothers decided to attend Marshall Academy, this made up Albert's mind immediately: he wanted to go to Marshall.

And so at the age of 15, young Albert Gallatin Jenkins went away from home for the first time in his life. His room-mate at Marshall, Henderson Miller of Mason County, helped him over many a rough spot. Albert looked up to Henderson, three years his elder, and a lifelong friendship developed. When Henderson Miller was married several years later he naturally called on Albert to be his best man.

### Land Bought For \$40

In the early 1800's, the Mt. Hebron log church was on the site where Old Main now stands. It took the genius of John O. Laidley, a Parkersburg lawyer who moved to Barboursville and then to a farm west of the mouth of the Guyandotte River,

to stir the establishment of the Academy which in 1837 was named after Chief Justice John Marshall. For exactly \$40 an acre and a quarter of land was purchased from James Holderby and his wife Lucy, and to this four-room academy on the little strip of land Albert Gallatin Jenkins came in 1845 — just eight years after Marshall Academy was founded.

When Albert came to Marshall Academy, the principal was Rev. Josiah B. Poage, a native of Pocahontas County and a graduate of Princeton University. Rev. Poage received a salary of \$400 per year, which was paid by the Board of Elders of the Presbyterian Church since Rev. Poage served as pastor of the Presbyterian Church on a half-time basis. The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, which took over Marshall Academy in 1850, also had a strong influence at the Academy during the period when Albert Gallatin Jenkins studied there.

Young Albert reported for the winter session on October 1, 1845, a little over a month before his fifteenth birthday. He paid out \$30 to board with a "respectable family" for the 10 month period of the winter and summer terms. Displaying the same energy and imagination he had shown while studying Latin before he came to Marshall, he made a brilliant record in mathematics, sciences, composition, elocution, music and languages.

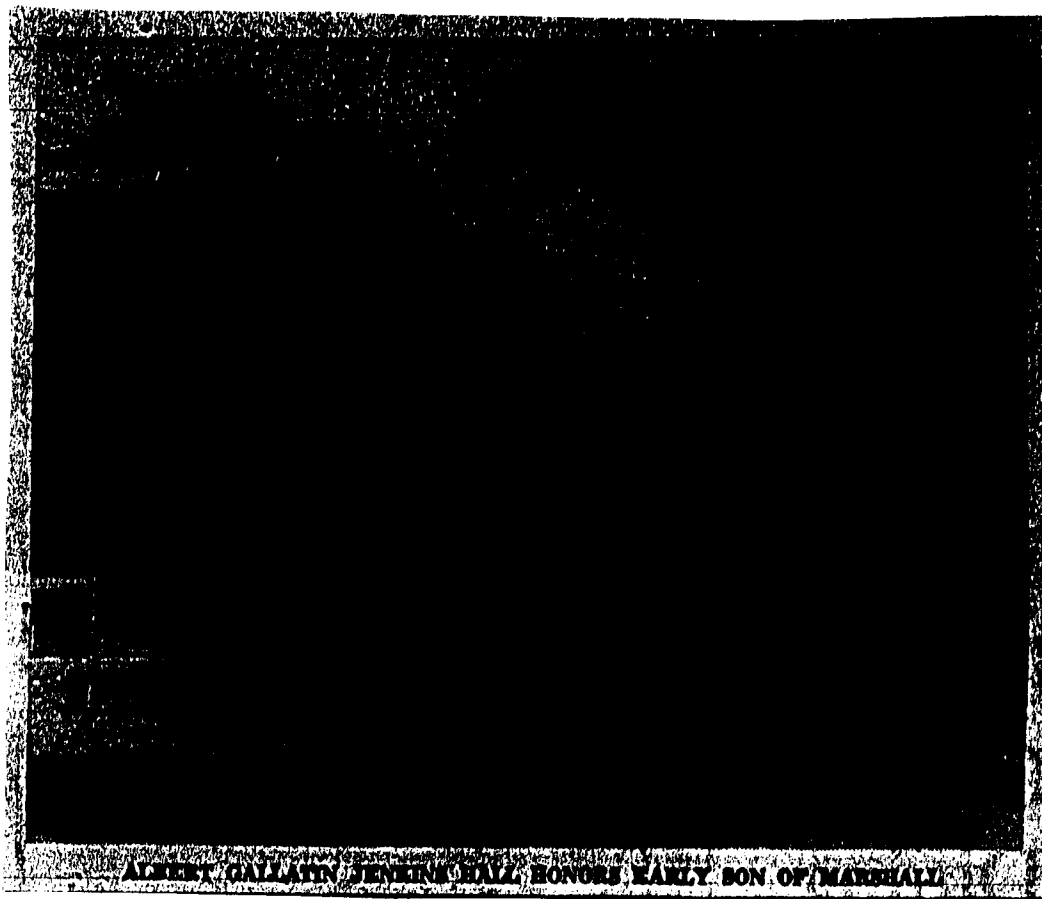
The pioneering John Laidley, who was President of the Board of Trustees of Marshall Academy, helped move Marshall Academy forward despite severe handicaps from lack of funds. Yes, there was a building program. A few years before Albert Gallatin Jenkins arrived THE building was constructed: a two-story brick building, 22 feet wide and 80 feet long. This was the four-room structure in which young Jenkins and his two elder brothers received their preparatory education.

### Legislature Gave \$68.97

Yes, there were some problems with getting enough appropriations from the State Legislature, too. Those were the days when we were still part of the State of Virginia, but the purse-strings were certainly no looser. Although the State appropriated a grand total of \$213.70 for Marshall Academy in its first year, this amount had declined to \$68.97 per year during those years when Albert Gallatin Jenkins was in attendance. In a strikingly familiar-sounding statement, it was reported by the House of Delegates that, it was inexpedient to grant an additional appropriation for Marshall because of the already encumbered finances of the State.

Although Albert Gallatin Jenkins spent only a short time at Marshall Academy, the schooling enabled him to go on to an even more brilliant career among the tougher competition of college students from many states.

On the one hundredth anniversary of the founding of Marshall, on June 1, 1937, the Honorable C. C. Thomas, Secretary of the War Veterans Board of Control, made these remarks in dedicating the building: "School, now more familiarly known as the Marshall High School" to Albert Gallatin Jenkins.



ALBERT GALLATIN JENKINS HALL, HONORS EARLY SON OF MARSHALL

"We have met here today on the one hundredth anniversary of this renowned institution to do honor to one of her boys who successfully mastered her academic course in the early days of his career, and then with the preparation gained here, sought and mastered other and more advanced courses in other and higher institutions of learning. Albert Gallatin Jenkins was a stern, rugged character. He lived at a period in our country's history when men's passions were at a fever heat and those who aspired to leadership had to have these qualities . . . General Albert Gallatin Jenkins, we dedicate to you this day this handsome structure of stone, brick and concrete to be always known as Albert Gallatin Jenkins Hall; not with the thought of the necessity of preserving your honored name, for history has accomplished that; nor with the thought that we could add additional luster to an already glorious career; but simply to add a recognition to one of our distinguished alumni, to encourage future boys to emulate your example."

(To be Continued)